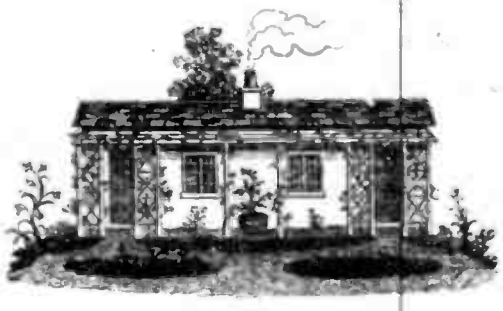
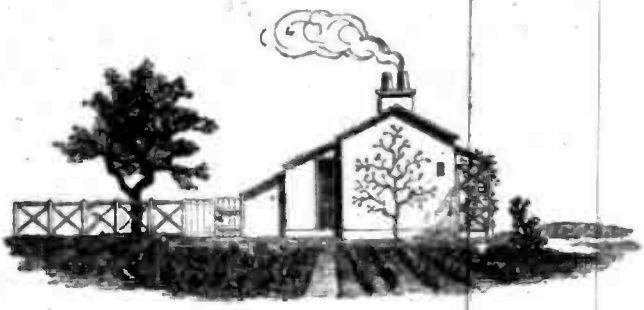
WOODEN HOUSES.

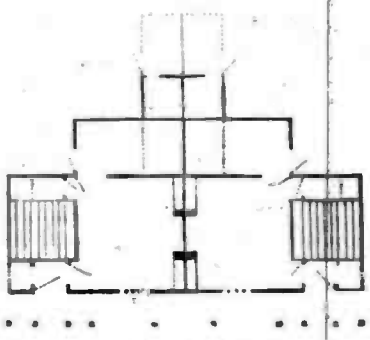
We gave last week, from the collected designs of Mr. Loudon, a nice suggestion for English wooden houses in rural districts. This has called up a notice, or drawn our attention to a manufacture which is carried on in this metropolis on a large scale, in preparing wooden houses for the colonies, suited to the necessities of emigrants. It is quite amusing, and in truth, we may say, refreshing, to see this species of manufacture in operation for the benefit of the industrious of our own country. The raw material is conveyed hither from the distant foreign tributaries, and operated on by English artisans, to be forwarded in the complete state, ready for setting up, for the comfort and advantage of our emigrating fellow-countrymen. Of course, it will not be expected that any great display of architecture can be attempted in such cases; but there are, in some instances of Mr. Thompson's creations, not a little of this; and some of the plans are peculiarly happy in their arrangement. We could only select for our present purpose the front and end elevation and plan which accompany this article: it is for a double cottage, and would be no bad model for many of our home builders, even in more durable materials than timber. We regret that the information did not reach us earlier, so as to have enabled us to visit Mr. Thompson's manufactory in the Commercial Road, and to have seen, before it was dismantled for packing, a two-story house of twelve rooms, intended for Madras; we feel assured that the inspection would have afforded us much interest, and that a description and draught of it would have been equally gratifying to our readers.



Front View.



End Elevation.



Ground Plan.

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS.

At a recent meeting of this institution, Mr. Papworth read a paper explaining the method adopted by him in 1829, to confine the lateral walls, then inclining outward, of Trinity church, on Clapham-common. Upon a survey of the building, it was discovered that the brick footings of the walls of the church and tower were built upon a continuous four-inch yellow fir planking, containing much resinous matter, and abounding with large knots. In the first instance the trenches were not dug perfectly level, and the bottom course of brickwork was laid dry, thence much of the trench was in winter subject to wet, and at all times to some moisture. In some parts, particularly the north-west angle of the tower and west staircase, the timber was probably never dry: the nature of gravel (absorbing moisture freely), upon which the walls were built, of course admits damp air, and the timber is proportionably subject to the decay common to wood when so circumstanced.

The footings were first examined from the vaults, when the timber beneath the brickwork was found to be in such a pulpy state generally, excepting at the knots and closely adjacent fibres, that the walls, both of church and tower, might really be said entirely to depend on the latter for support, with the addition of the adhesion of the materials and the strength contributed by occasional cross walls. The planking was very soon removed, and York stone steps and proper underpinning substituted.

Although portions of the church walls, from the parapets down to the plates receiving the gallery floors, were leaning outwards, it was found that all beneath was nearly upright; of course this led to an examination of the ceiling, in which, at about the middle, a wide crack appeared, running from the west towards the east end. On examining the roof, it appeared that the fissure and the overhanging of the walls was caused by the pressure outward of the principal rafters, and chiefly on the south side of the church. This pressure outward had disjointed the tie-beams, which had been scarfed in no very judicious manner in the middle (the church being about 59 ft. wide), the scarfing was merely bound together by slight iron bands, and thin iron ties, depending on staples at their turned-up ends and some spikes to restrain the lateral thrust; which force had almost wholly disengaged these contrivances, and amply accounted for the effects observed. The roof is of a mixed character, uniting the king-post and queen-post arrangement. The queens were framed into the upper rafters, and those rafters, the tie-beam and the king-post united, and made a roof independent of the other timbers, the usual straining beam between the heads of the queen-posts being omitted. The disarrangement of the timbers of the roof, by settlements common to them, and the displacement caused by the thrust, made it proper to prepare for the operation of drawing the separated scarfed ends of the tie-beams somewhat closer, it not being intended to give very much further effect to the power contemplated, because it might have produced injury to the entire roof, and to the upper part of the walls, the gutters and slating—at least it was considered injudicious to risk so much probable damage.

The object was only to prevent a greater separation of the tie-beams at their scarfings, to stop any further thrust to the walls, and it appeared that, by drawing the lower ends of the queen-posts nearer to each other, each having a tendency to urge back its moiety of the tie-beam towards the centre, that much might be done, and at no great expense. It being found that the queen-post mortices in the tie-beam were far from being filled by the tenons of the queens, and that to draw them much out of the perpendicular, might produce a further and serious disarrangement of the timbers above. To keep the queens upright, and therefore nearly parallel to each other, the timbers were bolted together through the heads of the queens, through the struts, and through the middle of the king-post, and iron-blockings, intended to oppose any movement more than desirable, were carefully fitted and bolted to the top of the tie-beam at the foot of each queen-post. The application of iron rods, having powerfully threaded screws and ample washers and nuts, was of course a matter of easy accomplishment, and when put into operation, there would evidently have been no difficulty in bringing the ends of the timbers into close contact; but, as above stated, there was no wish to effect much more than full security, and they were only drawn together enough to close in part the fissure in the ceiling. As will be evident on reflection, this operation of drawing together the posts might, without due care, have left the tie-beams without any check to their tendency to sag, and it was therefore found proper, at the time the iron blockings were fixed on to the top of the tie-beams, to saddle on them iron straps, bolted well through the tie-beams.

The authorities of Clapham church, not doubting the stability of the edifice, directed, in October last, the execution of two additional galleries for about 150 children, when the consequent scaffolding afforded the opportunity of a close examination, and it is very satisfactory to observe that the operation has been completely successful, and that no settlement, nor spreading, of the roof, nor further overhanging of the walls, has taken place.

PRECEPT OF COMMISSION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE METROPOLIS.

Whitehall; Nov. 30, 1842.

The Queen has been pleased to appoint the Earl of Lincoln, Lord Littleton, Lord Colborne, the Right Hon. J. C. Herries, the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor of London, Sir R. H. Inglis, Bart., Sir S. Leman, Bart., H. T. Hope, Esq., H. G. Knight, Esq., Alex. Milne, Esq., the Right Hon. S. Gore, Sir R. Smirke, Knight, and C. Barry, Esq., to be Her Majesty's Commissioners for inquiring into and considering the most effectual means of improving the metropolis, and of providing increased facilities of communication therein.

Secretary, T. WP HILLIRS, Esq.,
2, Whitehall Place.

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